

CONFIDENTIAL

OLC 72-0356

20 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Ed Braswell, Chief Counsel, Senate
Armed Services Committee, Re Funding of Irregular
Forces in Laos

1. Ed Braswell called today to advise us that he has given the Pentagon until Friday of this week to provide the Committee with an alternative method of funding the irregular forces in Laos. Braswell said he assumes DOD is in touch with us on this. I told him David Hessler and some other Pentagon people were out last week to talk with us about alternatives and our people briefed them on the mechanics of how we make payments to [redacted] Laotian irregulars. I added that this had been an eye opener for them in terms of the rather unusual way in which the money is put in the hands of the irregulars. I said Hessler is preparing a draft of one or more alternatives which he will submit to us for comment. (I later checked with [redacted] OPPB, who told me such a draft has been referred to us and has been sent out for Agency comment. [redacted] later advised me he had rewritten this paper and is sending me a copy.)

2. Mr. Braswell then said that he also wanted a position from us concerning the alternative methods of funding. I repeated a statement I had made to him earlier to the effect the Director's position on this was that we were running the program because we had been directed to do so. Braswell said what he wanted from us was a statement as to whether we would prefer (assuming that a change from the present system would be made) to have DOD or State Department take over the program. Braswell reminded me he was only trying to be helpful in having this program go in the direction which the Agency would want it to go (again assuming that we would be out of it). He said he has been lead to believe the Agency wants to retain the program. When I asked him if he got this impression from DOD he would not elaborate. I told Braswell I would be back in touch with him shortly.

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Deputy Legislative Counsel

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